



## Faith Communities In Lincoln's Springfield

Abraham Lincoln is considered to be one of the greatest presidents of all time, most famous for preserving a nation and inspiring its citizens with his speeches and writings. Before his call to lead the nation, Abraham Lincoln and his family resided in Springfield, Illinois, a community that undoubtedly influenced that man who would be president. We know a great deal about the people of Springfield who interacted with Lincoln, his family, neighbors, law partners, etc., but what we know much less about where they worshipped. In 1860, Springfield had at least nineteen churches and one burgeoning synagogue and services were given in three different languages. The diversity of Springfield is reflected in its diverse faith communities.

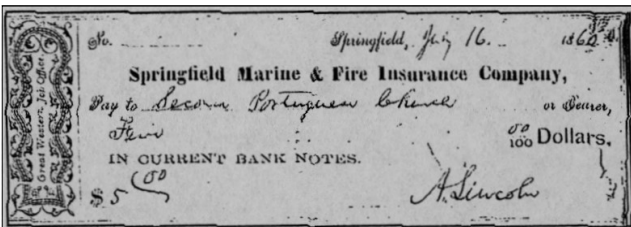
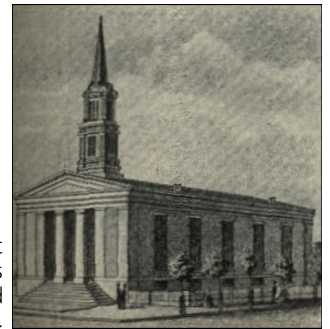


The Lincoln family pew at the First Presbyterian Church

A few steps outside of Lincoln Home National Historic Site is the First Presbyterian Church. Although this particular building wasn't used until 1876, it does contain the Lincoln family pew and is where Mary Lincoln's funeral was conducted on July 19, 1882. The First Presbyterian Church was founded in 1828, by Mary Lincoln's uncle and

Abraham Lincoln's law partner, John Todd Stuart.

In 1860, the First Presbyterian Church was located at Third and Washington Streets.



Lincoln made a \$5 donation to the Second Portuguese Presbyterian Church in 1860.

Employees of the Lincoln household attended a variety of churches. Mariah Vance, the family laundress for over a decade, was a founding member of the Colored Baptist Church. This church was begun in 1838,

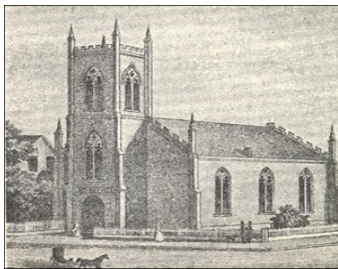
in the home of Anderson Carter. Another employee, Frances DeFreitas, a woman of Portuguese descent, and child caregiver, attended the second Portuguese Presbyterian Church. The Lincoln family purchased a wedding dress for Ms. DeFreitas and Lincoln made a \$5 donation to her church on July 16, 1860.



Reverend Springer founded the Lutheran Church in Springfield and held their first church services in his home, just south of the Lincoln home.

Some stories of faith communities in Lincoln's Springfield can be found within Lincoln Home National Historic Site. The first house south of the Lincoln home was the home of Reverend Francis Springer. Reverend Springer was an ordained Lutheran minister who started the Lutheran church services in Springfield at his Eighth Street home. Ultimately, two churches grew from the services held in his home, a German speaking church and an English speaking church.

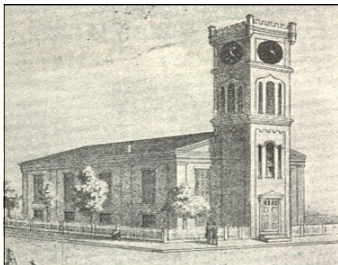
Jameson Jenkins, another neighbor was a member of Second Presbyterian Church. The Second Presbyterian church separated from the First Presbyterian Church because of a difference of opinion of slavery. The First Presbyterian Church members believed in the gradual end of slavery. The Second Presbyterian Church members advocated for the immediate end of slavery.



Mary Lincoln's Kentucky Todd family, had an Episcopalian religious tradition. Three of Mary Lincoln's sisters also lived in Springfield. Mary's sisters, Elizabeth Edwards and Francis Wallace attended

St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Mary Lincoln also attended St. Paul's before she formally joined First Presbyterian. It has not been determined where sister Ann Smith attended church.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1860



John Todd Stuart, Lincoln's first law partner was a founding member of the First Presbyterian Church. Stephen Logan, Lincoln's second law partner was a founding member of the First Christian Church.

Lincoln's final law partner, William Herndon, did not affiliate with a faith community in Springfield. However, he contributed, with Lincoln, to the funding of the construction of the First Baptist Church of Springfield in 1848.

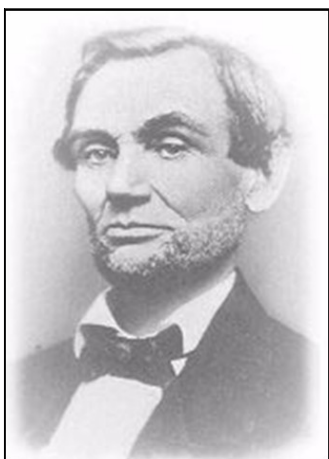
First Baptist Church, 1860



William Fleurville, a barber of Haitian descent, befriended Lincoln and cut his hair for almost 25 years. Before a Catholic church was built in Springfield, he held mass for Creoles and West Indian congregants in his home. He was also one of the founding members of St. Peter and Paul Catholic church.

William Fleurville, "Billie the Barber," was Lincoln's barber and was a founding member of Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church.

Springfield clothier Julius Hammerslough moved to Springfield with his two brothers in 1855 and became the President of the Springfield Hebrew Congregation that began meeting in 1858. Hammerslough attended Lincoln's first inauguration in 1861, and four years later, he participated in the planning of Lincoln's Springfield funeral.



There were other faith communities that existed in Springfield during Lincoln's residency period, many of them are still meeting and have recently celebrated anniversaries of at least 150 years. These communities share several things in common. A majority of them started in a home with a faithful few; they shared similar experiences as Lincoln in seeing the diversity of Springfield through language, race, and culture. The following churches appeared in the 1860 Springfield city directory:

*First Baptist  
North Baptist  
German Baptist  
First Presbyterian  
Second Presbyterian  
Third Presbyterian  
First Portuguese Presbyterian  
Second Portuguese Presbyterian  
English Lutheran  
German Lutheran  
St. Paul Episcopal  
Methodist Episcopal  
German Methodist  
Christian Church  
First Universalist  
Roman Catholic  
St. John the Baptist Catholic  
African Baptist  
African Methodist Episcopal*

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